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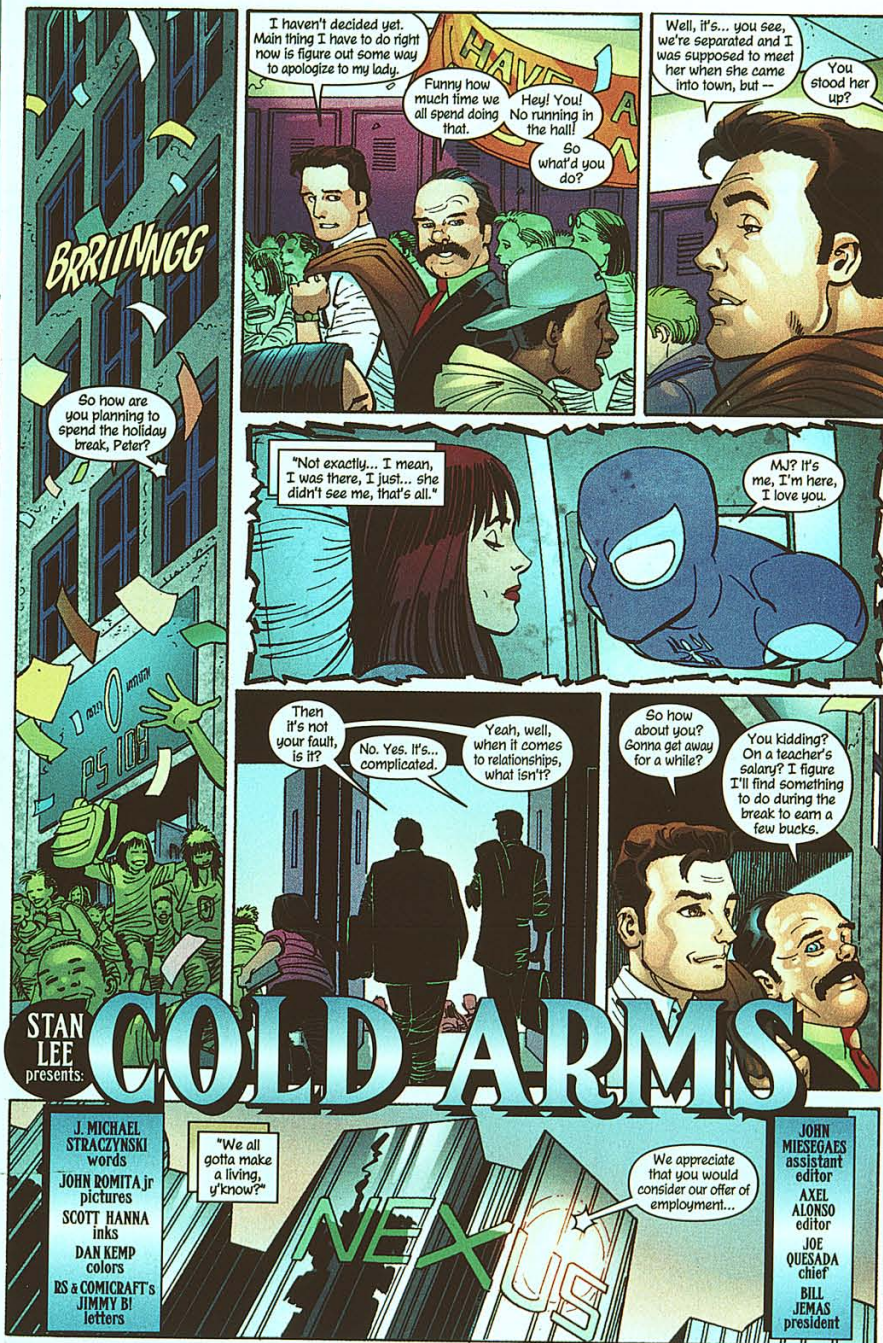


the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



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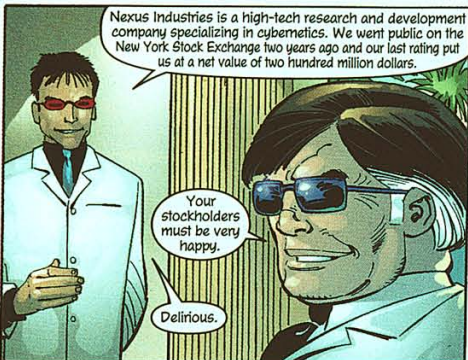
STRACZYNSKI
ROMITA JR
HANNA





...Doctor Octavius.

The pleasure is entirely mine, Mr. Carlyle. In this economy such opportunities do not come around very often. So what did you have in mind?



Nexus Industries is a high-tech research and development company specializing in cybernetics. We went public on the New York Stock Exchange two years ago and our last rating put us at a net value of two hundred million dollars.

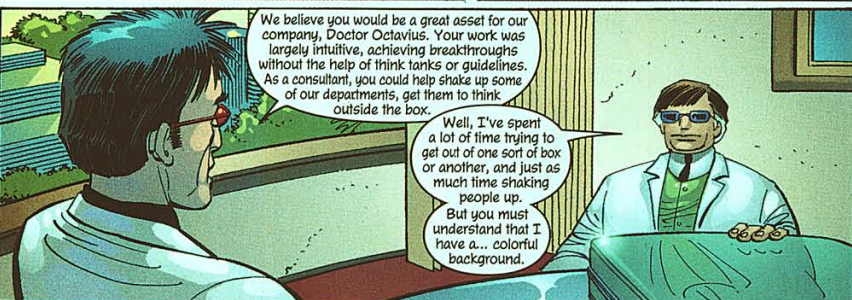
Your stockholders must be very happy.

Delirious.



It's unfortunate that your work in cybernetics is not as well known or respected as it deserves. You were one of the first real pioneers in this area, thanks to your remarkable... appendages.

Thank you. And my tentacles are pretty impressive too. Old joke. You were saying...?



We believe you would be a great asset for our company, Doctor Octavius. Your work was largely intuitive, achieving breakthroughs without the help of think tanks or guidelines. As a consultant, you could help shake up some of our departments, get them to think outside the box.

Well, I've spent a lot of time trying to get out of one sort of box or another, and just as much time shaking people up. But you must understand that I have a... colorful background.



We don't care about what you did in the past, Doctor Octavius. Only what you can do for us now. But I will admit to being curious. Did you... bring it?



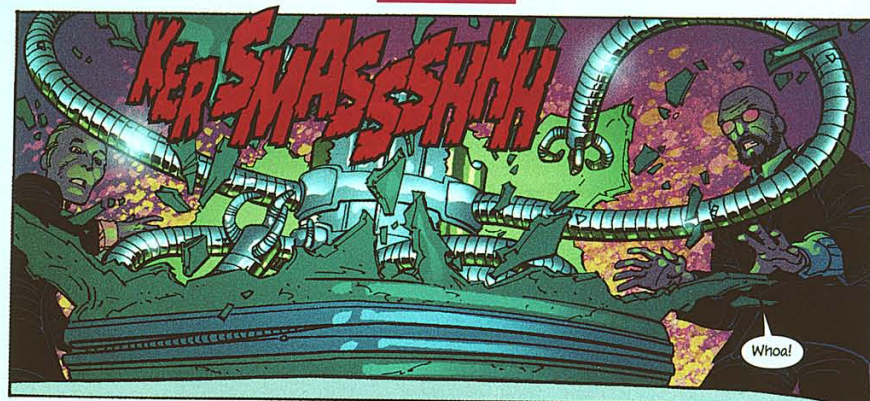
Of course. It's right in there. Go ahead and open it.

It's locked.

Is it? How forgetful. Allow me.

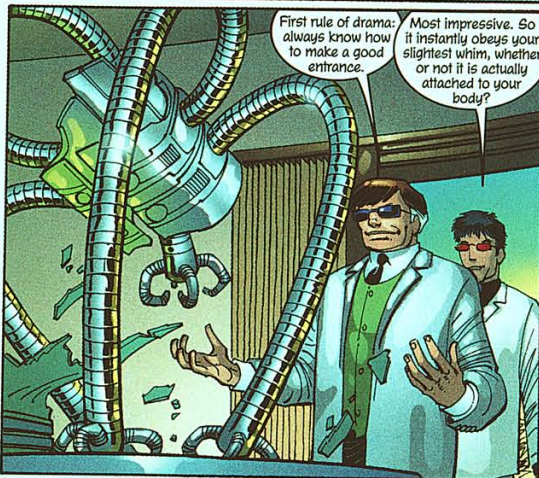


Or, more precisely, allow *me* to allow *them*.



KER-SMASSHHH

Whoa!



First rule of drama: always know how to make a good entrance.

Most impressive. So it instantly obeys your slightest whim, whether or not it is actually attached to your body?



There's a slight delay the farther away they are, and I can't get through at all if there's something in the way, like steel plating, but for the most part they respond immediately.

And they're strong?



Very.

Good.

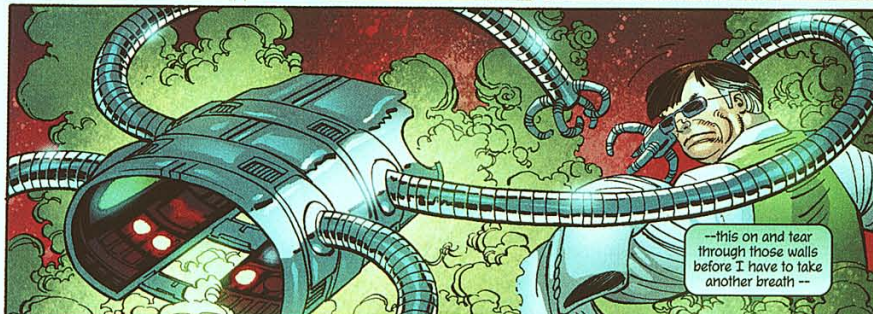


If you'll give us just a few moments to confer, I'll bring in the rest of my team. I'm sure we can put an offer on the table that you'll find more than acceptable.

Take your time. I can wait.

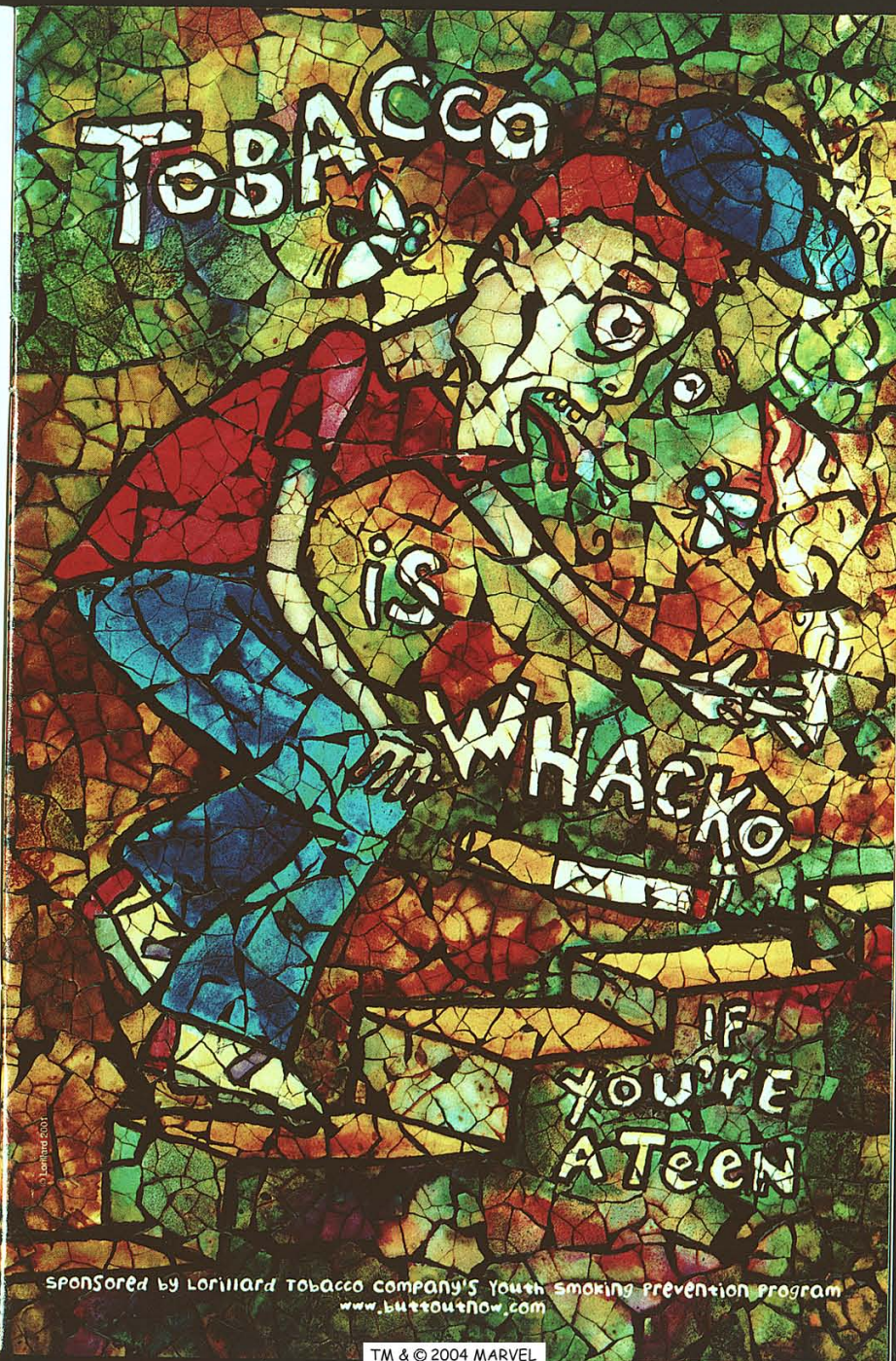


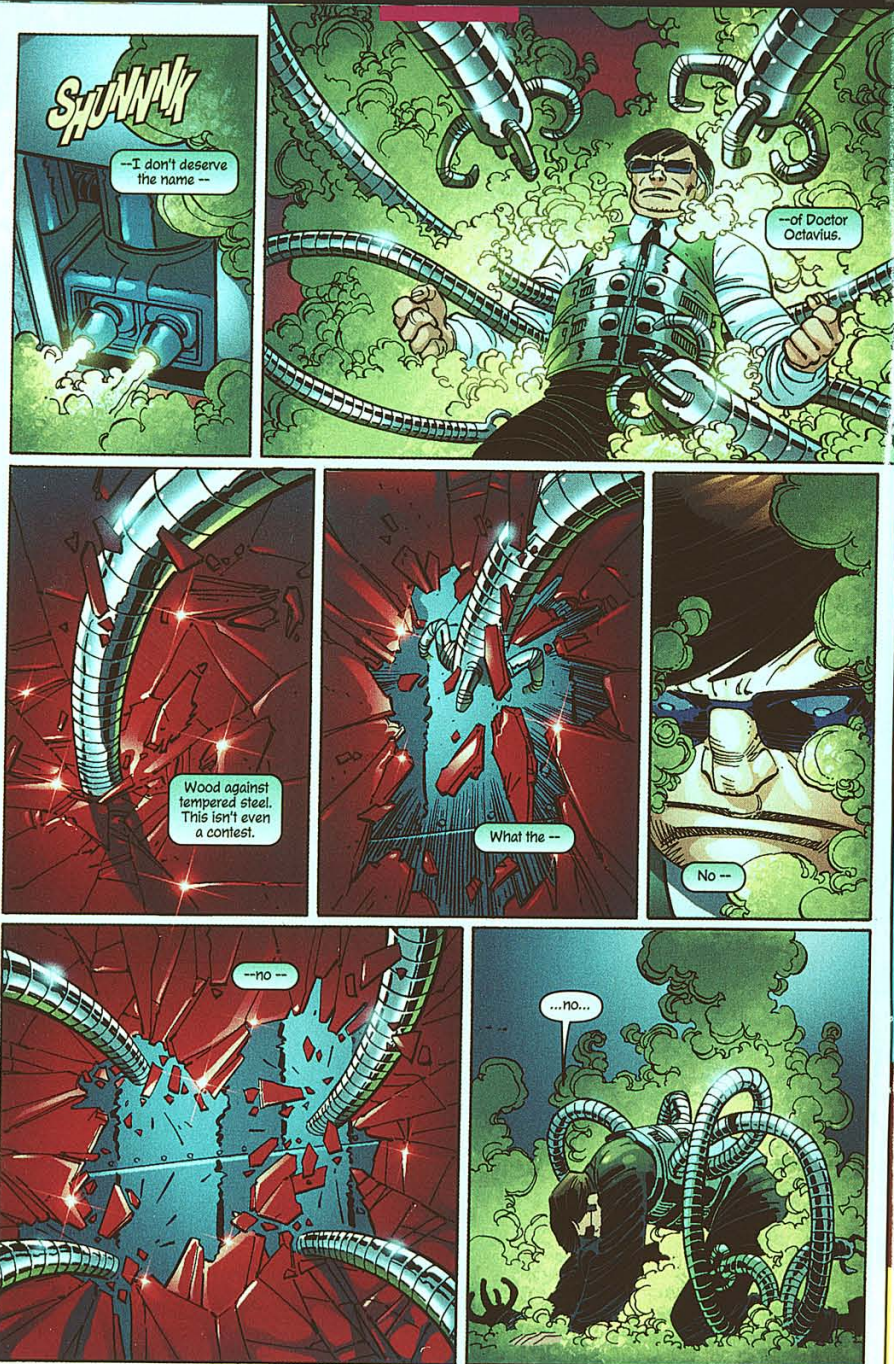
I've waited this long for someone to recognize the legitimacy of my work. I can afford to wait a few more minutes.



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How to spot a

Sweet

TART

You never EMBARRASS your older brother

except in front of his GIRLFRIEND.

You do your homework EVERY night

If your favorite TV shows aren't on.

You let your sister have the game CONTROLLER

when you're DONE with it.



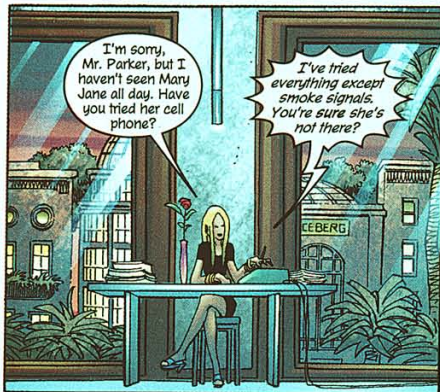
Yeah, you're a good guy, but we know you've got that other side, too. Just like SweetTARTS; the candy with the tart and tangy, mouth-puckering taste.

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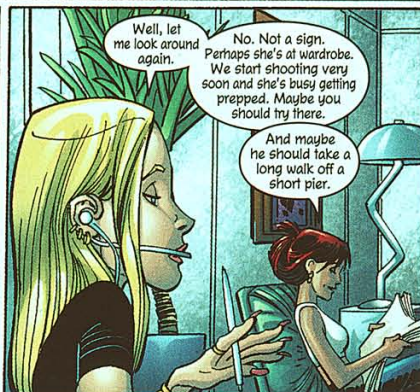


"Look, can you give me a break? I've just about hit bottom."



I'm sorry, Mr. Parker, but I haven't seen Mary Jane all day. Have you tried her cell phone?

I've tried everything except smoke signals. You're sure she's not there?



Well, let me look around again.

No. Not a sign. Perhaps she's at wardrobe. We start shooting very soon and she's busy getting prepped. Maybe you should try there.

And maybe he should take a long walk off a short pier.



Can you give me the number for wardrobe?

I'm sorry, but I can't give out that kind of information.

But you said --

I'm sorry, but I have to go now --

Can you at least give her a message for me?



Just... tell her that I'm sorry, and I love her, and I have a good -- a really, really good explanation -- for what happened, and --

--just... have her call me, okay?

I'll pass along the message, Mr. Parker.



He said --

He said he loves me and he has a very good explanation for standing me up, right?

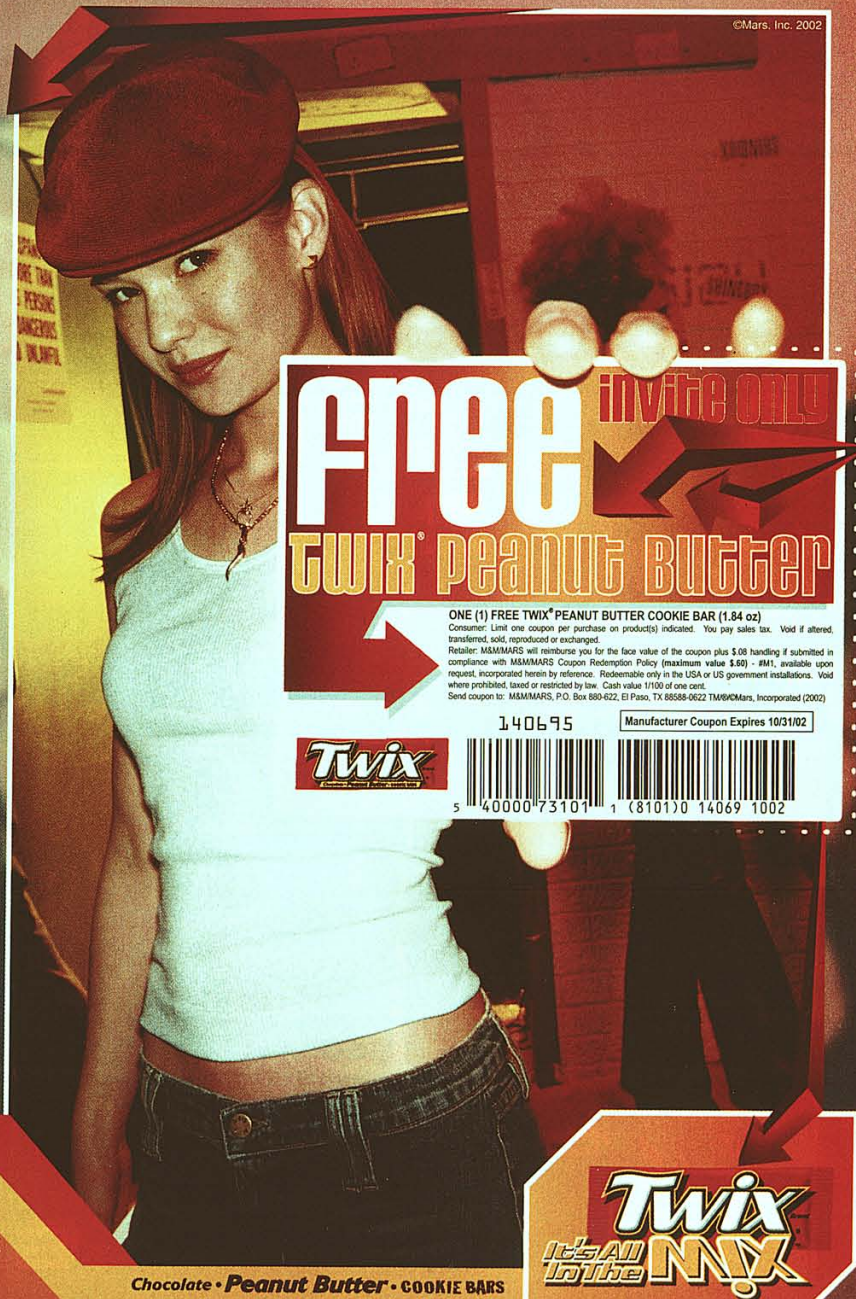
Yup.



Yeah, well, if the first was true, he wouldn't need the second, now would he?

I'll call him back. Eventually.

"Funny, isn't it, how some things never come out quite the way you planned...?"



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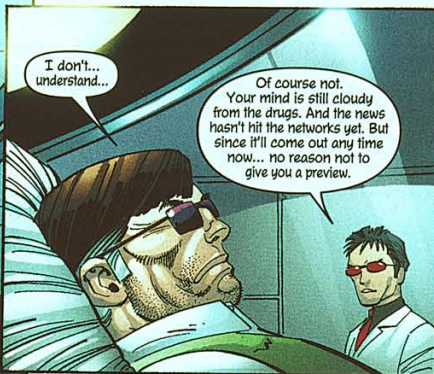


You came here five days ago hoping to be hired as a consultant. And a consultant you've been... just not in quite the way you had in mind.

Five... Days?

Actually, I thought it would take a lot longer to get the job done. But you hire the right people, you get the job done fast.

I'm just glad I won't be here when they try to cash the checks.

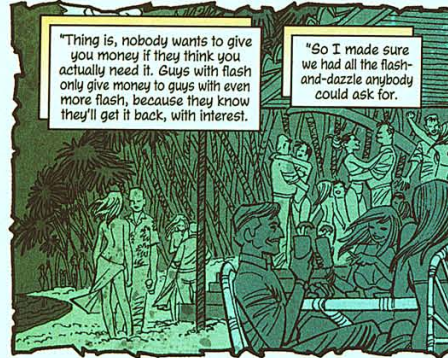


I don't... understand...

Of course not. Your mind is still cloudy from the drugs. And the news hasn't hit the networks yet. But since it'll come out any time now... no reason not to give you a preview.

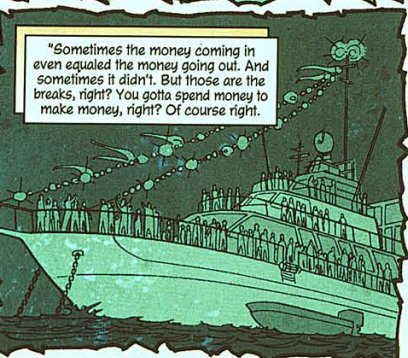
"I came aboard Nexus because they needed someone to be the mouth, to help promote and advance the public image of the company, raise the value of the stocks.

"It's just good they needed someone in a hurry and didn't go as deep in their background checks as they should have gone.



"Thing is, nobody wants to give you money if they think you actually need it. Guys with flash only give money to guys with even more flash, because they know they'll get it back, with interest.

"So I made sure we had all the flash-and-dazzle anybody could ask for.



"Sometimes the money coming in even equaled the money going out. And sometimes it didn't. But those are the breaks, right? You gotta spend money to make money, right? Of course right.



"What did come in, went back out in acquisitions of other businesses. I even set up some dummy subsidiaries and financed them from inside the company, counting their assets as revenue to make the company look bigger and stronger on the stock market.

"And it worked.

"At least on paper.

"For a while.



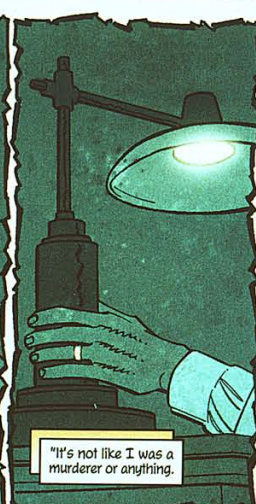
"But all good things come to an end. When a bunch of debts came due, and we had to cover for a fall-off in productivity, the figures didn't add up.

"That's when the CEO found out what had been going on... and who he'd hired.



"Convictions for fraud. Forgery. Extortion. Racketeering. Not to mention assault and battery and a bunch of other charges, all under another name.

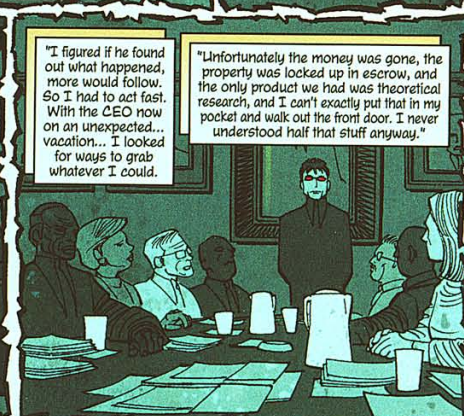
"But c'mon, who in this big wide world *doesn't* have something to hide, right?



"It's not like I was a murderer or anything.



"At least... not before that night.



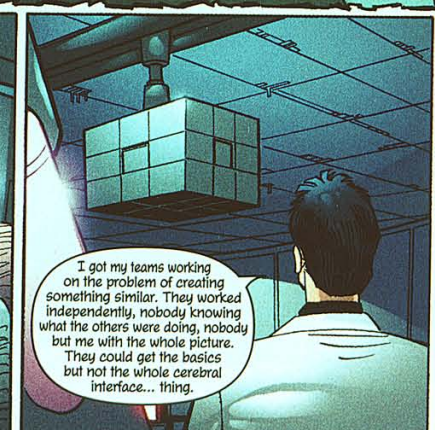
"I figured if he found out what happened, more would follow. So I had to act fast. With the CEO now on an unexpected... vacation... I looked for ways to grab whatever I could.

"Unfortunately the money was gone, the property was locked up in escrow, and the only product we had was theoretical research, and I can't exactly put that in my pocket and walk out the front door. I never understood half that stuff anyway."



So I had to figure out what I really wanted. And you know what it is?

To be free, to make my own way so that nobody could ever stop me. And that's when I thought of you. And those extraordinary mechanisms of yours.



I got my teams working on the problem of creating something similar. They worked independently, nobody knowing what the others were doing, nobody but me with the whole picture. They could get the basics but not the whole cerebral interface... thing.

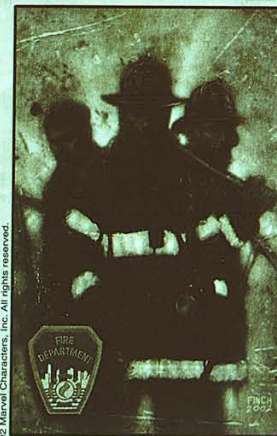


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THE CALL OF DUTY



The Brotherhood



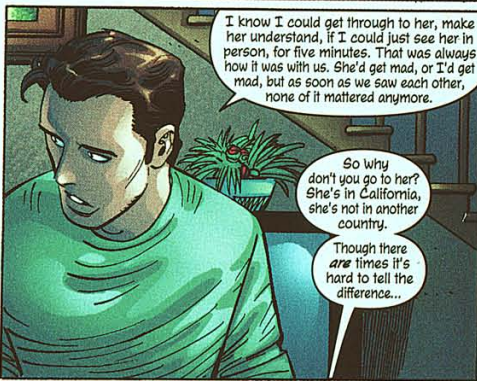
The Precinct



The Wagon

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FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE

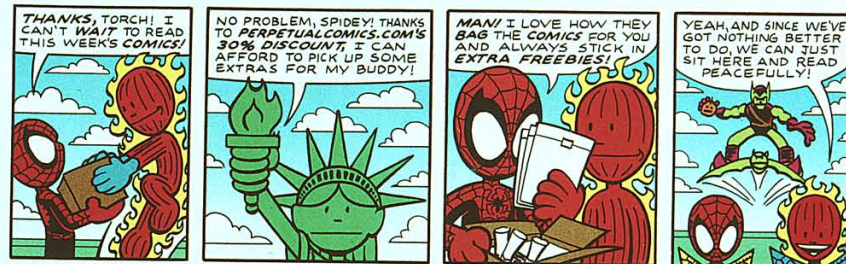


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"After all, these days, anyone and anything can be a weapon."

I love L.A...
ba-ba-bum...
I love L.A...



Yes, can I help you?

I'd like to make a withdrawal.

Can you give me your account number?



I'd love to --



--but I'm in kind of a hurry --



--so with your understanding --



--I'll just take it all.



Everybody get down!



There's always one guy who never gets the message...



AAAGGGHHH!



Jim!



That --



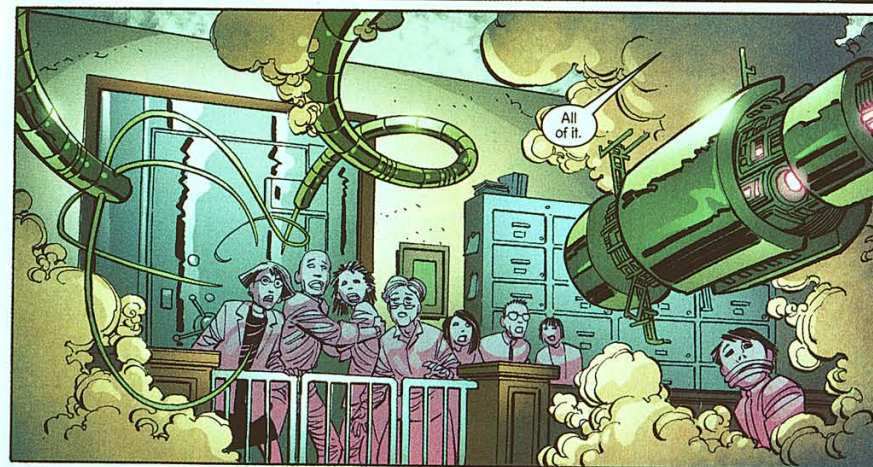
The money.



--will be --



--enough!

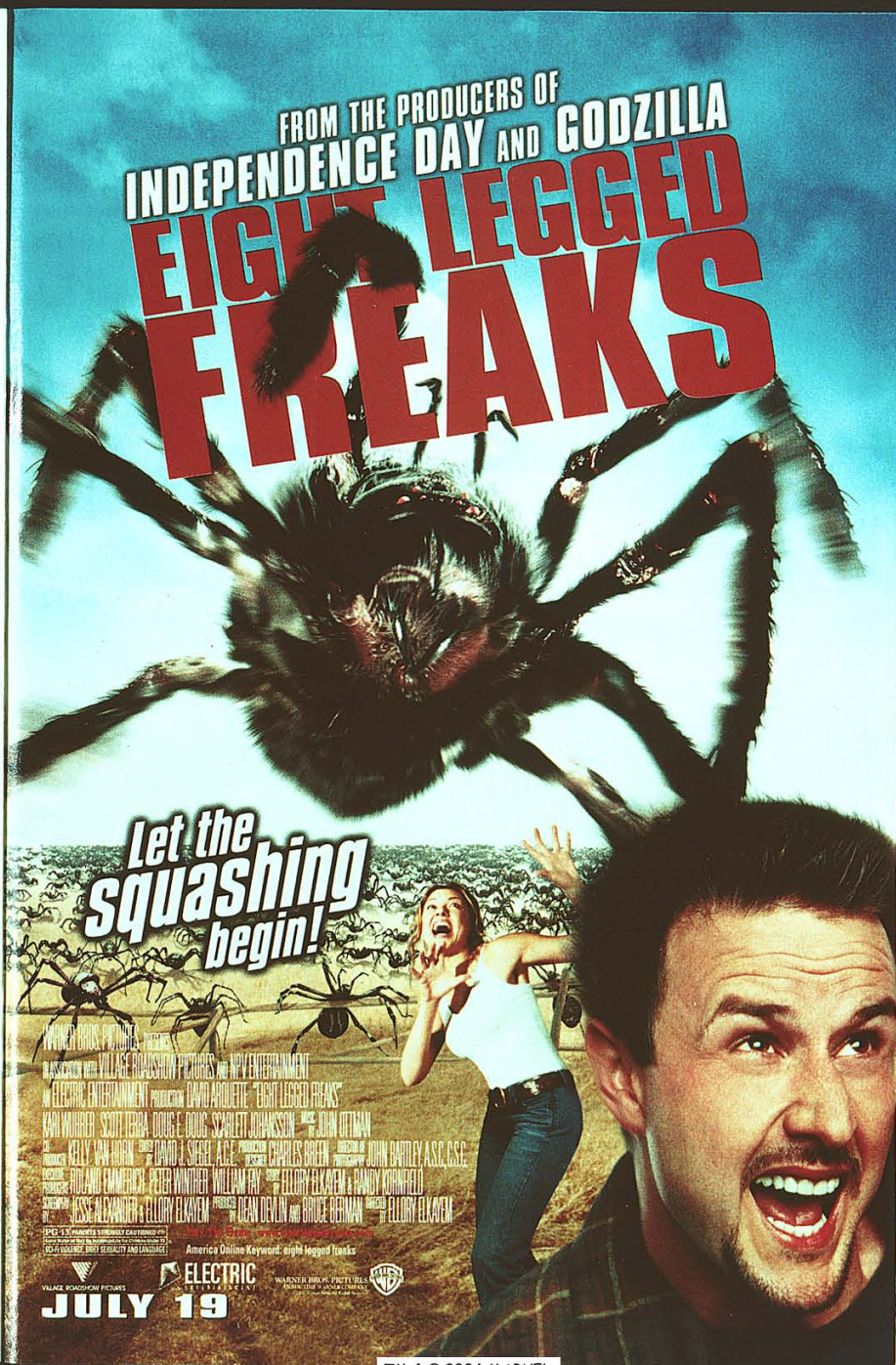
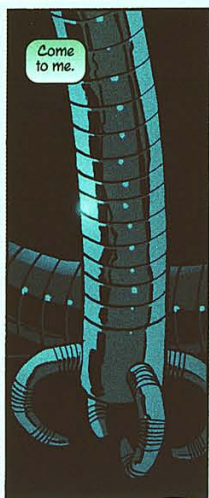


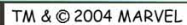
All of it.



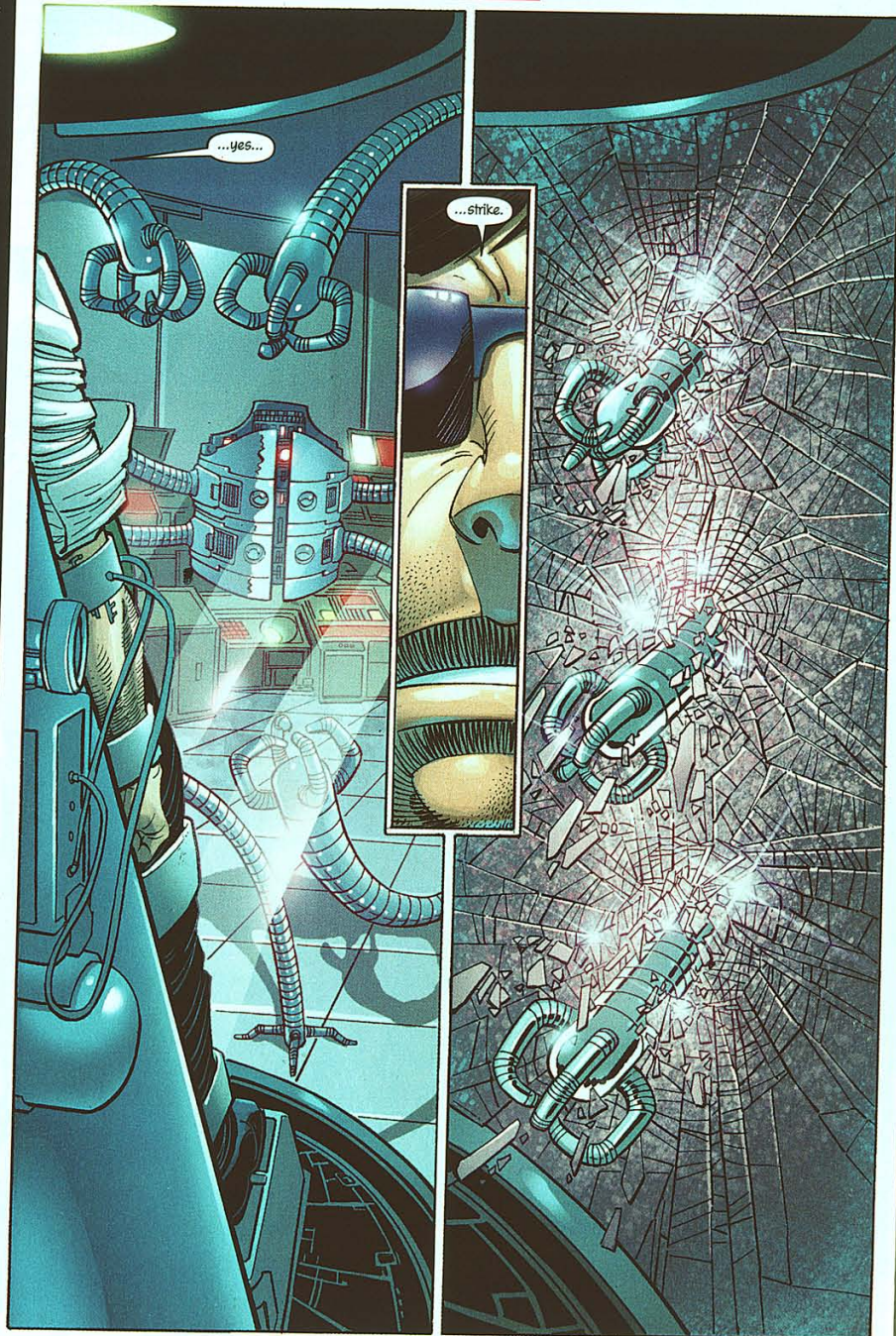
Now.

It's now...
it's now... or
it's never...





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Well, Mr. Devereaux, I'm as ready as I can be since I haven't even seen a script --

Script's just a blueprint, MJ. A jumping off point. We don't give out the script because we don't want it showing up on any of those creep websites. Besides, the director figures he'll have everybody improv most of the dialogue as you go.



But... you're the producer; how do you keep the story intact if everybody's making it up as they go?

Shorts! Lady, you really think people go to movies for the story? It's spectacle, MJ, it's all about spectacle.



Okay, I guess, so what's my part in this... spectacle? All I got in the breakdown was the character's name, age, and that she looks good in lingerie.

You're playing Cynthia LaVenus, the love interest for our protagonist --

--well, until you get killed in act two, sending him into a killing rage that only ends when he meets girlfriend number two in act three.



And the protagonist is...?

Rick Turk, you may have seen him in that indie flick *Hell Hath Some Nerve*. Great kid, a little slow on the uptake, but --

No, I mean, what's his character?

Oh. That.



You're gonna love this... I mean, you're really gonna love this.

Uh-huh... so who's --



You're playing the love interest of a super hero. How about that, huh?

I mean, I know it's kind of a stretch, but --

No... no, it's all right, I'm sure I can... get into the part somehow.



As long as you can get into the lingerie, babe, that's all anybody cares about. See you in wardrobe.

I'll be bringing some friends, if that's okay... just check you out a bit... man, I love making movies...



--so you can call the Bugle and they'll confirm who I am. They sent me to get some behind-the-scenes pictures --

You with the union? We can't have photographers here unless they're with the union --

If I can just make a call to the set --

Can't do that, sorry.



Look, I'm telling you --

And I'm telling you, we don't allow anybody on the lot unless we know who's what because we got a problem with stalkers.

Hello, Peter.

I'm not a --



"Hello, Peter?"

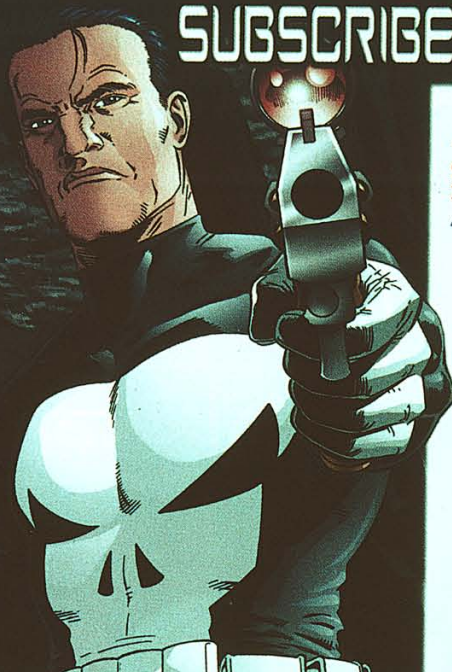


Just give me five minutes before you have me thrown off the lot, MJ.

You've got two. Make the best of them.

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☐ **WOL** Wolverine
☐ **XFO** X-Statix (X-Force)
☐ **MEN** New X-Men
☐ **XTR** X-Treme X-Men

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